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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers identifies critical issues in mentoring and mentoring programs. Paper 1, "Support Behaviors Among Teachers in Authentic Settings" (Deborah L. Bainer), discusses the following issues: (1) mentoring is just one of the types of support behaviors needed and practiced by teachers in elementary schools; (2) support networks differ between male and female teachers; and (3) informal mentoring occurs in schools whether or not formalized programs exist. Paper 2, "Mentoring and the Impact of Local Teacher Organizations" (Mary Bendixen-Noe), discusses mentoring in Ohio, describing critical issues from the perspective of local teacher organizations (funding, mentor selection, and administrative support). Paper 3, "Standardizing the Mentorship Program" (Barbara L. Brock), examines issues involved in mentor programs, including beginning teacher diversity, qualities and skills of effective mentors, practical considerations in arranging mentor-protege teams, and the principal's role in mentoring and mentoring programs. Paper 4, "Mentor Accountability: Varying Responses to One Mentor Program" (Anne D'Antonio Stinson), shares insights into mentoring in New Jersey as a newly instituted licensing requirement. The emergence of mentoring in a study of decision making among beginning teachers underscores the impact of formal mentoring on today's beginning teachers. Paper 5, "Leading the Way...State Initiatives and Mentoring" (Carmen Giebelhaus), discusses mentoring programs in Ohio, highlighting funding, mentor selection, and training issues, and placing Ohio's approach to mentoring within a national context. Paper 6, "Two Critical Issues: Aim and Assess" (Kent Runyon), uses program aims and evaluation to discuss mentoring programs, viewing formal mentoring as a multiple-year strategy. "Introduction" and "Final Thoughts" (Tom Ganser) introduce and wrap up the presentation. (Contains 38 references.) (SM)

Critical Issues in Mentoring and Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers

ED 425 146

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Introduction

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Today, teacher induction programs and especially mentoring programs are practically the rage in school districts across the United States. Induction programs have become a standard feature of staff development activities (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996) since their emergence thirty years ago. Recently, the critical shortage for qualified teachers in some content areas and in some parts of the country (Shortage of teachers to grow, 1998; Yasin, 1998), projected to last a decade due to increased enrollments (U. S. Department of Education, 1998a), has engendered competition among school districts to hire new teachers (Bradley, 1998). Some school districts "market" induction programs to attract applicants, and candidates for teaching positions consider the quality of an induction program in deciding whether or not to accept a job.

The most recent U. S. Department of Education (1998b) report on professional development shows that participation in teacher induction has steadily increased in recent years. Among teachers surveyed during 1993-94 with up to 3 years of teaching experience, 56.4 percent of public school teachers and 28.4 percent of private school teachers indicated that they participated in an induction program. This compares to a participation rate among teachers with 10 to 19 years of teaching experience of 17.4 percent for public school teachers and 18.7 percent for private school teachers.

A typical component of most induction activities is a mentoring program that enables new teachers to work with a mentor teacher for at least a year. Mentoring programs vary in terms of sponsorship by individual schools or school districts, consortia of schools, colleges or universities, professional organizations, or state departments of education. They also vary widely in

terms of resource allocation and overall comprehensiveness. Most programs last one year and are designed for beginning teachers with little or no previous paid teaching experience working with mentors who have full-time teaching responsibilities. More comprehensive, multiple year programs are also exist. For example, the Baltimore (Maryland) Country Public Schools Teacher Mentoring Program is designed for all teachers new to the district regardless of previous experience. In this program about 125 teachers are re-assigned from teaching responsibilities to serve as full time mentors for several new teachers. Full time mentor programs are also found in Milwaukee Public Schools and Bermuda.

The individuals who contributed to this paper were asked to identify two or three critical issues in mentoring and mentoring programs for teachers. As a technical note, none of the contributors read the papers of the others prior to submitting their own paper. Bainer's contribution to this paper focuses on mentoring in elementary schools. She approaches mentoring conceptually as one form of support for new teachers. Like Little (1990), Bainer situates mentoring within the context of schools as complex organizations. Bendixen-Noe and Giebelhaus discuss mentoring programs in Ohio. Bendixen-Noe describes critical issues from the perspective of local teacher organizations, including funding, mentor selection, and administrative support. Giebelhaus's commentary also highlights funding and mentor selection and training issues, and she places Ohio's approach to mentoring within a national context. Brock writes about important issues involved in mentor programs, including the diversity of beginning teachers, qualities and skills of effective mentors, and practical considerations in arranging for mentor/protégé teams. Brock also addresses the role of the principal in mentoring and mentoring programs. D'Antonio Stinson shares insights into mentoring in New Jersey as newly instituted licensing requirement. The emergence of mentoring in her study of decision-making among first-year English teachers underscores

the impact of formal mentoring programs on today's beginning teachers. Finally, Runyan uses program aims and evaluation to unify his discussion of mentoring programs. He also views formal mentoring as a multiple-year strategy.

Support Behaviors Among Teachers in Authentic Settings

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Hundreds of years ago, the land known today as Kampuchea was a strong and peaceful Asian kingdom. The land was virtually impervious to attack from the fierce nations surrounding it. Their defense? A thick, impenetrable forest of bamboo trees surrounding the nation. For generations, the Kampucheans lived safely and worked together, tending the stand of bamboo. Their downfall came when one innovative aggressor scattered gold nuggets among the bamboo plants. The Kampucheans scrambled greedily to collect nuggets for themselves, cutting down the bamboo plants to more easily mine the gold. They were no longer working together and their best defense was lost: their nation was overrun and a history of decline began.

In America today, public education is frequently under attack. While our greatest strength as educators should be in working together, nurturing each other, and tending a strong boundary of valid, research-based educational practice, we instead usually work individually in often hostile work cultures and increase our vulnerability to attack from outside forces. Mentoring programs are a promising vehicle to defend and build our ranks by pulling educators together to work and build educational practices.

The context of American education, however, may not be conducive to effective mentoring practices. This paper raises three issues regarding mentoring practices which have arisen from my collaborative research on how teachers work together in naturalistic elementary school settings.

Issue 1: Mentoring is just one of the types of support behaviors needed and practiced by teachers in elementary schools.

Our research suggests that teachers support each other in a variety of ways. That is, "mentoring" is multidimensional and formal mentoring, as it is generally defined and practiced in

school districts, is just one way teachers naturally support each other in school settings. Our research identified six dimensions or types of support among teachers (Bainer & Didham, 1994).

Mentoring - a non-reciprocal relationship for receiving advice, information, encouragement, and guidance from more experienced others in the workplace;

Supporting - a reciprocal relationship providing mutual psychosocial support including friendship, confirmation, and emotional support;

Collaborating - a career-enhancing relationship among colleagues that enables them to fulfill professional responsibilities and address student needs and school-related problems;

Career Strategizing - a non-reciprocal relationship providing visibility, recognition, and responsibility in the school and community;

Supervising - a non-reciprocal relationship in which solicited and unsolicited feedback is provided; and

Grounding - providing "insider information" about the ins and outs of the district, school, and larger teaching field.

These findings concur with research in business and industry that a variety of personal and professional support needs to be available in the workplace. Further, that support tends to be provided by a variety of people at a variety of levels within the hierarchical structure of the business world (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

What does this say to mentoring programs in education? It suggests that the traditional mentor-portage dyad may not be an appropriate model. Instead, teachers may need to turn to a variety of people to meet a variety of needs in the broad education context. A more appropriate model may be the "cluster

model" of mentoring, in which numerous situation-centered relationships are developed rather than just one close mentoring relationship. That is, we all need to work together in the school context. "Mentoring," or providing support, is everyone's responsibility.

Issue 2: Support networks differ between male and female teachers.

Our early research identified six separate aspects of support among teachers, despite their years of experience and school size. Gender, however, did seem to impact support networks. A follow-up study to investigate gender differences in how teachers support each other reaffirmed the six separate dimensions of support among female teachers discussed above (Bainer, 1995). For male elementary teachers, eight dimensions or types of support were found. Relationships identified by males served discrete, focused psychosocial or professional functions. Relationships identified by female teachers tended to integrate work-related and psychosocial functions. Supportive relationships with others in the school setting, whether current or in the past, had a significant and lasting impact on the way female teachers conceived of current support relationships. Past supportive relationships had little significant impact on male teachers' concept of support relationships, and present workplace relationships had less impact than they did for female teachers.

What does this suggest about mentoring programs in education? These findings suggest that male and female teachers may need different considerations and resources for support to develop healthy, comprehensive networks in elementary schools which ultimately result in their professional development. Taken further, it reminds us that "mentoring" or support networks within schools may need to be highly individualistic and situation specific. That is, a "cookie cutter" approach to mentoring will be maximally effective. Individualized approaches and program options are essential.

Issue 3: Informal mentoring occurs in schools whether or not

formalized programs exist.

Our research as well as the research from business and industry attest to the importance of support relationships to emotional health and professional effectiveness. Further, our research suggests that an active informal network of support relationships exists in elementary schools whether or not a formalized mentoring program exists. This finding reiterates the question raised by Cole (1991): Why should we make artificial what comes naturally? That is, why invest considerable time and money to formally structure relationships that can and do occur naturally, especially if that formalization inhibits the development of other naturally occurring support relationships?

Support among teachers many be better encouraged by focusing attention on the school context rather than by adopting a structured program that mandates traditional mentoring relationships. Efforts directed toward creating a conducive environment in which meaningful interactions can take place might yield better results. This includes considering the use of space, designation of time, and assignment of duties in elementary schools. A more flexible, "user friendly" elementary school setting seems essential to establishing an environment in which the range of support behaviors can naturally develop and flourish. This will provide educators with a strong defense against attack from outside forces.

Mentoring and the Impact of Local Teacher Organizations

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The influence of all the forces and factors that affect education today are numerous and widespread. They include: accreditation agencies, state departments of education, foundations, civil rights groups, publishers, state policy makers, colleges and universities, state and national teacher organizations, media, research establishments, and many others. Perhaps the one often overlooked, but the one that often oversees the implementation of the many practices is the local teacher organization. They can, in effect, bring success or failure to an idea through local interpretations and implementation details.

One example in Ohio is the concept of mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Ohio law (beginning in 2002) mandates that every school district establish and maintain an induction year mentoring program that will aid beginning teachers in passing a performance assessment (Ohio Department of Education, 1996). Guidelines and specifics are left to local school districts (read teacher organizations).

At a recent leadership conference that the Ohio Education Association (OEA) annually runs for local school organizations, I was invited to conduct mentor training. During that time, I had ample opportunity to discuss some of the over-riding concerns and issues with many individuals regarding mentoring programs and local teacher organizations. Highlights of those discussions follow.

To no one's surprise, the local contract will hold the key to the mentoring program. Local organizations need to be very careful in negotiating mentoring aspects, as the impact of their programs will depend upon it.

Money was mentioned as the vehicle driving many mentoring programs. Teachers feel that they are very hard pressed to find time to complete all their current tasks and that the aspect of

taking on one more job, such as mentoring, is daunting. Receiving pay for what is being viewed as a critical component in a beginning teacher's professional development is viewed as vital for a favorable mentoring program. Teachers fear money will limit the amount of release time necessary for completing the duties viewed as essential to their role as mentor. This will likely include visits in the beginning teacher's room to give them constructive feedback on their teaching. Remember the main goal of the mentoring program in Ohio is to aid entry year teachers in passing a performance assessment. Without adequate release time (read money), the coaching element of the mentoring program could fall apart. What this means to schools that already are struggling with inadequate funding remains to be seen. Teachers voiced the opinions that this could result in lower pay, fewer resources for the classroom and in probability little or no money available for professional development of teachers beyond their entry year.

Defining the mentoring role beyond the vague legal mandate will also be necessary for local teacher organizations. Each school district must personalize the mentoring program to fit their current situation. Money could once more dictate this element of mentoring. Individuals voiced concern of watering down the impact of the mentor by a layering of other responsibilities. They were worried about the role of mentor becoming too cumbersome for a person to handle all it may entail.

Mentor selection is often critical to a program's success. How schools decide how and who can serve, as a mentor is a big decision. Currently, there are few models that help schools in this component. Individuals at the Leadership Conference mentioned programs in using such obvious selection criteria such as seniority or "just the desire" to serve as a mentor. They were very honest in stating that number of years of teaching often does not constitute a good mentor. Likewise, desire alone may indicate an interest in helping (although some mentioned a more altruistic view in those individuals who would want to be a

mentor due to a monetary incentive), but may not necessarily guarantee the needed qualities. Still others mentioned how to rotate the mentor role, so 1) everyone gets a chance to participate and serve as a mentor; and 2) no one gets "burned out". It appears that the same individuals usually volunteer at many local school districts for everything due to what was viewed as apathy.

Administrative support was also indicated as important. Teachers said they wanted their administrators to understand the value of mentoring and to be flexible in defining individual mentor/protégé relationships. They expressed the desire that administrators be able to keep teacher evaluation very separate from mentoring but were afraid administrators at "crunch times" would want to combine the two, either through mentor input or by disregarding the "true" role of the mentor. Conversations became a very "us against them" approach when talking about administrators. Teachers felt administrators would use the mentoring program as just another bargaining chip when contract time appeared.

Teacher organizations have a powerful impact on mentoring programs. While certainly these organizations at both the state and national levels can help give helping guidelines and information, ultimately it is up to the local organizations to figure out a system that will work for them. Therefore to underestimate the power and influence of these entities is to do a disservice to the "true guts" of teaching. While nothing mentioned is new, it bears remembering and revisiting. Local teacher organizations have a major impact and investment in developing and maintaining mentoring programs. This entity can easily be overlooked or underestimated, but are a "real power" in determining vital decisions at the level where it counts.

Standardizing the Mentorship Program

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Although many school districts use mentors in their beginning teacher induction programs, the mentors often are assigned without criteria for selection and are provided with little or no training. In addition, once mentors are assigned, some principals cease active participation in the induction process (Brock & Grady, 1997). While these practices occasionally may yield positive results, long-term benefits are uneven and sometimes negated by a lack of systematic procedures.

A well-designed mentorship program has the potential to be responsive to individual needs and to delivery continuing professional development throughout the first years of a teacher's professional experience. Attention to the following issues can transform an unstructured mentorship program into one that is standardized and effective: 1) the diverse needs of beginning teachers, 2) criteria for selection and training of mentors, and 3) the role of the principal.

Beginning teachers are a diverse group. Some beginning teachers are embarking simultaneously on adulthood and a professional teaching career. Others are mature adults who recently completed teacher training or who are re-entering the profession after raising a family. Some beginners may be experts in a discipline but have had no teacher training. Given the diversity of beginning teachers, the content and process of mentoring needs to adapt to their specific circumstances (Brock & Grady, 1997).

The ability of the mentor is a critical component of a mentorship program. Thus, a quality mentorship program provides criteria for selection of mentors. The criteria should be based on the goals of the school and the mentorship program. Suggestions for criteria include experiences appropriate to the teacher's assignment and to pre-requisite knowledge, skills,

attitudes, and values. The mentor should be familiar with the school's and district's policies, procedures, organizational structure, curriculum, courses of study, and competencies (Gordon, 1990; Heller & Sindler, 1991).

Obviously, the mentor should be considered an expert teacher who has exceptional abilities in relating and communicating with other adults. An individual who works well with children may not necessarily relate well with another adult in a mentoring situation. A good mentor needs to have exceptional listening skills, be able to define a problem, generate alternative solutions, and work with a novice to select, implement, and evaluate a course of action (Haipt, 1990; Gordon, 1990). The ability to offer suggestions and possibilities without encroaching on the vulnerability of a novice teacher is perhaps one of the more challenging skills required (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992).

More practical considerations include proximity of classrooms, similar grade levels or course assignments, shared planning periods, philosophies, and teaching styles. The compatibility of gender, age, personalities, and interests is a variable to consider. Mentorship criteria also should take into account the respect of the mentor by peers, commitment to the teaching profession, desire to work with a novice, and willingness to spend the time and energy required (Gordon, 1990; Haipt, 1990).

Training is equally as important as mentor selection. Unfortunately, few schools provide training for their mentors (Brock & Grady, 1997). The process and substance of the training should be determined by the goals of the mentor program and the school context within which it operates. The body of knowledge and skills that provides the substance of the mentors' training subsequently provides the platform for evaluation of the mentors.

Mentors need an array of strategies for data collection and interpretation, diagnostic strategies, and conferencing skills. A variety of techniques is available for mentors to determine the

needs of beginning teachers. One technique is an assessment of beginning teacher needs, completed at the beginning of the school year and repeated periodically throughout the induction period. The assessment will provide the mentor with information regarding the changing needs and problems of their protégé. Odell (1986) suggests including the following items on the assessment: information about the school and district, obtaining resources, teaching strategies, emotional support, student management, scheduling and planning, conferencing with parents, and classroom organization. Gordon (1990) suggests including open-ended questions, such as "I am having difficulty with. . ." or "I would like assistance with. . . " to allow teachers to express problems not listed on the assessment list.

Mentors also need training in questioning strategies, listening skills, classroom observation, and conferencing. Knowledge of effective questioning strategies will be useful to mentors whose protégés may be reluctant to discuss their problems. Equally important is the ability to listen reflectively. Walker (1992) suggests listening with three ears - to what a person says, what a person does not say, and what a person wants to say but does not know how to say. Finally, mentors need to acquire skills in classroom observation and conferencing. Pre-conferencing, classroom observation techniques, and post-conferencing techniques are valuable tools to include in mentor training.

The final piece of a well-planned and executed mentorship is the principal. Although neglected in the literature, the role of the principal is critical. The principal's role is to coordinate the mentorship program to insure that the goals of the mentors are in tangent with other supervisors who work with the beginners.

Unfortunately, some principals cease active participation in the mentorship process once the mentors have been assigned. They fail to realize that beginning teachers want and need interaction and feedback from their principal (Brock & Grady, 1997). As

instructional leader of the school, the principal should complement the work of the mentors by spending time interacting on a regular basis with his/her teachers. Beginning teachers need to know what the principal's expectations are for instructional methods, time management, discipline, grading, and student achievement. Although beginning teachers appreciate the assistance of mentors, the principal is the person whom they need to please and who will likely evaluate them (Brock & Grady, 1997).

Mentorship programs are needed and desired by beginning teachers. However, the programs need to be based on criteria for mentor selection, a process for training, and a clearly defined role for the principal. Schools that provide structure to the mentorship program will be more consistent in their development of successful beginning teachers.

Mentor Accountability: Varying Responses to One Mentor Program

Anne D'Antonio Stinson, Ed.D.
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Two critical issues for mentors and mentoring programs for teachers are the lack of understanding of their roles by mentors and the resulting inadequate implementation of mentor programs. I have worked extensively with first-year teachers, and, while collecting data for a study of the influences that affected the decisions made by four first-year English teachers, identified these critical issues in mentoring. This paper describes my experiences with a statewide mentor program in New Jersey.

In the fall of 1995, the New Jersey Department of Education implemented its Provisional Teacher Certification Program (State of New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). A first-year teacher applying for initial certification would no longer be awarded a permanent teaching license. Instead, the first-year teacher would be awarded a Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) license which would authorize the holder to seek employment. Once under contract, the first-year teacher would be awarded a Provisional License and would complete one year of mentored teaching before being issued a standard license. The hiring district was to appoint a veteran teacher to act as mentor to the new teacher. In exchange for providing "training, support, and evaluation," the mentor would receive a $550.00 stipend which was to be deducted from the new teacher's salary over the course of the school year.

Coincidentally, during that same fall semester, I began collecting data for my study of four beginning English teachers. While I had not intended to examine the mentor program, it did turn out to be an important influence on the decision making of my participants, both in positive and negative respects. The purpose of this paper is to explore the various responses of the participants of my study, Betty, Caroline, Lori, and Marie, to the mentor program.

Betty

When considering Betty and her response to the Provisional Teacher Certification Program, it is important to note that participation in the program was, in the fall of 1995, mandatory. Interestingly, Betty did not have a mentor. Aside from myself and two inclusion teachers assigned to two of her classes, Betty, a half-time teacher/half-time yearbook coordinator, did not seem to receive a great deal of support from the other members of the English department, the department supervisor included. During our last visit, Betty asked about the other study participants and how they had fared with their mentors, and she stated that she was not pleased with the lack of support she had suffered:

> Well, it's bad . . . . I don't know how anyone else is, from the people you've talked to, how their first year . . . you know, the state thing? Where you're supposed to work with a mentor? I really wish my experience would have been a lot more formal, the way it's supposed to be, where you're . . . you know. I don't even think they took the money out of my paycheck. I would have rather that they had done that and then I would have had the chance to talk to somebody on a regular basis . . . . Sometime it just would have helped to check in and to have caught something before it became a big problem.

For Betty, the Provisional Teacher Certification Program was a complete failure. Operating on a technicality (Betty's half-time teaching load), the district did not provide Betty with a mentor. Her half-time status, however, did not spare her the anxieties experienced by many first-year teachers.

Caroline

Because she held a split position (half-time at a middle school and half-time at a high school) Caroline had two mentors. During our first interview, Caroline spoke of the support she received from her department, and she mentioned both mentors by name:

> Ian is my mentor here [at the middle school] and Chris is my mentor at the high school. So I have two mentors and they're both really good and helpful. And they both [are concerned that] they're mentoring and helping.

Throughout the course of the year, however, with one brief exception, Caroline never referred to these mentors nor mentioned any support or guidance she might have received from them. Furthermore, when Ian, Caroline's mentor at the middle school, passed away half-way through the year, Caroline was not assigned a new mentor. It appeared that all involved had abandoned the mentor program. Unlike Betty, who lamented the fact that she did not have a mentor, Caroline appeared to have much in common with the 46% of Anctil's (1991) subjects who reported that a mentor was not necessary, even though they also reported that the quality of mentoring they had received was "very high" (p.7). Although the mentor program was mandatory, and she should have been assigned a mentor, Caroline, apparently, did not see the need for one. I am sure, however, that the mentor stipend continued to be deducted from Caroline's salary.

Lori

In addition to the support and/or evaluation she received from other teachers in her department, her department chair, and her younger sister, who was also beginning her teaching career that year, Lori, in contrast to Caroline and Betty, received a great deal of support from her mentor. In fact, Lori often spoke of "[mentor]izing" her lessons. Lori's mentor made regular visits to her classroom and offered suggestions to improve her teaching. He also helped Lori navigate the politics of that particular school and provided her with a sounding board off which she could safely vent her frustrations. This mentor role was important since, as Bower (1991) and Weinstein (1988) maintain is often the case with beginning teachers, Lori's expectations conflicted with the reality of teaching.

Marie

Marie's story is a worst-case scenario. Marie had been

assigned a mentor; however, as of my last meeting with Marie, she had yet to meet with her mentor other than in passing. She described her first year of teaching as less than rewarding:

> They just throw you [into the classroom]. Here's your classes and you're just expected to know what their expectations are of you and the curriculum and the program and all these things . . . . I think that's where the mentor thing was supposed to help. And I guess that if you had it set up the right way, I can't see how it wouldn't be helpful, at the very least! But if it's not set up where you see this person, and she gets the extra prep . . . . I told her [to observe me during her extra preparation period], but she's never done that. And she tells me "I hear you're doing a good job."

According to Anctil (1991), "mentor accountability" is a critical issue in mentoring and an area that receives too little attention. The inadequate response of Marie's mentor to this assignment, and the resulting alienation suffered by Marie, support this contention.

Understanding the Mentor's Role

Hayes and Kilgore(1991) found that new teachers expect support and assistance from veteran teachers and that this support helps new teachers develop a reflective teaching stance. To this end, several states, New Jersey among them, have instituted mentor programs for first-year teachers. The apparent level of reflection in which each of my participants engaged was affected by the amount and quality of support she received (or didn't receive)from her mentor. My findings suggest the importance of mentor programs for first-year teachers. My findings also illustrate the varying responses mentors and building-level administrators can and do have to mentor programs and the need to place more emphasis on the importance of the first-year teacher/mentor relationship and the mentor's responsibility for fostering that relationship.

The mentors mentioned here exhibited very different understandings of the mentor role. Betty's building level administrators failed her by not providing her with a mentor. In not appreciating the importance of a mentor for a first-year teacher, they chose to not assign one to her, as if half-time teachers do not have the same fears and concerns about teaching as full-time teachers. In this school, for this first-year teacher, this resulted in an inadequately implemented mentor program.

Lori's official mentor and the other members of her extensive support staff exhibit a strong appreciation of the first-year teacher/mentor relationship and an appreciation of the importance of the support and assistance many new teachers want and need. In contrast, Marie's mentor and those around her failed to appreciate the importance of their roles, failed to provide this necessary support; these failures resulted in the worst implementation of the Provisional Teacher Certification Program of any school in my study.

Mentor programs are not necessary for everyone. Certainly Caroline survived, even flourished, without extensive mentoring. More than likely, Lori would have sought out her own support system even without the guidance of her mentor. However, for those who need and want such support in the form of a formal mentor program, properly implemented mentor programs administered by trained individuals who thoroughly understand their roles as mentors are critical to first-year teaching success.

Leading the Way . . . State Initiatives and Mentoring

Carmen Giebelhaus, Ph.D.
Ohio Department of Education

Historically, the preparation of teachers has been the exclusive domain of teacher education institutions, both pre-service education and professional development. States have made certification requirements for continuing education, but rarely has there been any "official" notice of what a beginning teacher needs to be successful during that first year of full time teaching. That is until recently. A developing trend in teacher education reform is that states are mandating induction year programs as part of teacher preparation. But with these state initiatives, numerous issues, problems and concerns have surfaced including:

1. a lack of consistency in the definition of what constitutes mentoring and support among the stakeholders both between states and within the states;
2. a need for the development of appropriate and effective models for mentoring; and
3. adequate funding to develop, initiate and sustain an effective mentoring program.

These issues, problems, and concerns are faced by every state and the local school districts that hire beginning teachers. States that mandate beginning teacher support systems must address these concerns if they are going to meet the needs of our beginning teachers and ultimately, the children they teach.

There is wide variation in how the term mentoring is used and in the programs that are offered. Clearly, mentoring means different things to different stakeholders. Is a mentor a "buddy" or is the person recognized for his expertise as a teacher and leader within the professional community? Will we provide such support to all first year teachers within a building, or only to those who are first year within the profession? Will some beginning teachers be exempted and under

what conditions? How will mentors be selected? What support will mentors be given to facilitate the fulfillment of their role? Without clear definition of what constitutes a good mentoring program, state policy may not meet the expectations and needs of the beginning teacher.

Often, we look to each other for direction; however, with regard to mentoring, state initiatives that extend teacher preparation into the first year of teaching vary in terms of both procedures and processes. The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education (NASDTEC, 1996-1997) notes the variation in programs across states in the 1996-1997 NASDTEC *Manual*. Of the just 28 states noted in the *Manual* as having mentoring programs or Beginning Teacher Support Systems (BTSS), only 15 require all beginning teachers to participate in the programs. Most state initiatives included some sort of training for the beginning teacher (20), but only 16 states have allocated additional funding to support beginning teacher mentoring programs. In addition, there is little mention of mentor selection and/or training and few of the states involve the teacher preparation institutions in the support system for beginning teachers. Finally, the policies regarding the evaluation of mentoring programs and those which extend support beyond the first year vary greatly from state to state. Without clear focus of what constitutes effective mentoring, it is little wonder why inconsistency and lack of focus may occur.

The need to develop models, therefore, which can provide consistency and focus to the development of local mentoring programs is warranted. These models should include a framework for selection and training of mentors, opportunities for mentors and their protégé to work together, including opportunities for direct observations of teaching, opportunities for beginning teachers to participate in on-going professional development, and guidelines for assessment and evaluation of the mentoring program. Clearly, effective mentoring requires that mentors not only possess expertise in teaching, but have knowledge of teacher

development, beginning teacher problems, adult development and the skills associated with recognizing effective teaching, and conducting observations/supervision (Odell, 1987). Effective mentoring programs provide opportunities for the development of good mentors with the knowledge and skill to fulfill the role. Mentoring also requires time for both mentor and protégé. It is impossible for a mentor with his/her own classroom responsibilities to find the time to establish a relationship with a beginning teacher, much less to conduct observations and give feedback without some form of support from the administration. Support for the development of such relationships is critical in the success of mentoring programs. Continuing professional development of the beginning teacher through in-service training is another aspect of mentoring programs that should be considered. And finally, models of mentoring programs should include a means for gathering information to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Such data could come from a variety of sources including teacher (administrator, mentor and protégé) surveys, retention rates, student surveys and/or achievement information, and participation data. Regardless of how information is gathered, it should be gathered and analyzed in order to determine whether the needs of the state, district, school and individuals are being met.

Finally, perhaps the most critical issue facing states is that of funding. How much and to whom is it given? It is obvious that to train mentors, to provide them with time to work with new teachers and to collect information and disseminate the results . . . all of this takes money. States send a clear message to local school districts regarding the importance of mentoring programs by the amount of funds that are allocated. Some states have initiated the "unfunded mandate," which guarantees uneven compliance or in many cases non-compliance! Other states have adopted the system of competitive grants. Again, there is an enormous opening for uneven compliance and

unequal opportunity. If a mentoring and support system for beginning teachers is mandated, then the funding should accompany the law. The manner in which the funding is dispersed is not as important as the fact that money is available to support the model and requirements established within the mandate. In at least one state, Ohio, the mandate is part of the recently implemented Teacher Education and Licensure Standards (Ohio Department of Education, 1996). The local school districts and institutions of higher education have been encouraged to work together to establish mentoring networks. Further, the state has developed and adopted a framework for mentor training which includes identification of and discussion around specific effective teaching behaviors. Funding has been provided through grants, both federal and state. Although each local school district develops their mentoring program which meets their unique needs, all are linked to the performance-based licensing requirements for new teachers.

Linda Darling-Hammond (1996) stated that the lack of effective mentoring is one of the barriers to having competent teachers for every child. If this is true, and there is increasing evidence to support this, then it is imperative that states take the leadership role in developing, insuring, and maintaining comprehensive, systematic mentoring and support programs for all beginning teachers.

Two Critical Issues: Aim and Assess

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As with any educational program, there are basic questions which come to mind when examining the critical issues facing teacher mentoring programs:

1. What should be the primary aims of a mentoring program?
2. How should mentoring programs be evaluated?
3. What are the characteristics of an effective mentoring program?
4. Who should be in charge of deciding?

These questions offer an argumentative framework for viewing various mentoring efforts and for analysis of issues associated with the diversity of programs. Answering and exploring the gray areas provides an avenue for defining the critical issues. Using this perspective, I believe the two most critical issues in teacher mentoring programs revolve around what should be the primary aims and how the program should be evaluated. In addressing these two issues, the other questions are resolved.

Critical Issue #1: What should be the primary aims?

First, in examining the primary aims, most programs can be divided into either evaluative (where the mentor is part of the evaluative process for retention or certification) or developmental (where the mentor has no authority to evaluate but assists in the teacher's development based on situational needs). Because first-year teachers have different personality needs and behavioral tendencies which are illustrated in such factors as gender, marital status, age, parenthood, educational level, school placement, and other such factors and because each is placed in different school climates, it is apparent that for mentoring programs to be effective they will have to offer individualization and diversity through meeting both personal and professional needs. Following this logic, a potent program would

base most of its interaction on meeting the situational personal and professional needs as perceived by the beginning teacher and not on outside evaluation deficits derived from mentor observations.

As with any effective program, whether developmental or deficit oriented, the specific aims should be derived from a clear philosophical orientation and research oriented rationale. Though different induction programs delineate their goals in various fashions, I believe effective programs contain part or all of the following aims. Clearly focused, effective programs typically:

1. have a fundamental philosophy which recognizes the beginning teacher as one who has a set of skills and needs, and as a result of the program:
   a. develops, extends, modifies, or refines these skills;
   b. orients the beginning teacher to the school system; and
   c. addresses and meets the perceived personal and professional needs of the teacher;
2. have a well defined set of rationales and goals;
3. provide continuous year-long support from the preschool orientation to third-year tenure through various organized support systems;
4. use various personnel to offer a vast array of materials, instruments, and activities to personalize each beginning teacher's year;
5. have mentors selected, trained, and focused using current knowledge available about the beginning teacher;
6. provide frequent support interaction and targeted topics to help the beginning teacher in adjusting, expressing needs, and developing;
7. offers a large number of instructional and non-instructional areas on which the beginning teacher

could focus when the need surfaces;

8. not interfere with the school evaluation system but allow for the program to provide an improvement system for any weaknesses found in the formal evaluation; and
9. be able to show positive growth from the beginning teacher's own perception of skills and knowledge as well as other qualitative and quantitative data.

From this set of aspirations, influential mentoring programs take aim.

Critical Issue #2: How should programs be evaluated?

Secondly, in examining how mentoring programs should be evaluated, convincing programs offer quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate to what extent their aims and aspirations were met. In order to assess, modify, and refine programs, it is important to construct an evaluation system which is multifaceted. Questionnaire responses and perception differences from both beginning teachers, mentors, and principals could be used to assess the program subjectively. Retention rates, teaching performance standard compliance, student performance, portfolio documentation, and quantitative positive growth from the beginning teacher's own perception of skills and knowledge could be used to show statistical data.

One of the most promising avenues for evaluating mentoring programs involves using the theoretical framework that each teacher is in a state of becoming and each tends to move through defined stages from a survival mentality to making an impact on every child. I tend to believe that by using the beginning teacher's own perceptions of need at various times throughout a three year period and tracking the data, a program can illustrate each teacher's movement through developmental stages. Characteristics of possible stages could be:

Establishing Structures

Acquiring supplies and establishing room layout
Knowing school policies, norms and culture
Building collegial staff relationships

Establishing classroom procedures and routines
Setting rules and reinforcing them to gain respect of students
Expanding subject matter knowledge
Lesson planning for high time on task
Coping with evaluation, other's opinion, and fear of failure
Knowing parents and opening lines of communication

Developing the Science of Teaching

Using various models of teaching correctly
Acquisition of innovative techniques, activities, and ideas
Asking classroom questions effectively and providing review and practice
Providing timely assignment feedback and furnishing justification for grades
Clear direction giving, illustration, and transitions so classroom activities move smoothly
Identifying learning styles, characteristics, and needs of class
Providing sponge activities to keep students busy
Managing time pressures

Developing the Art of Teaching

Being novel, vivid, and varied in teaching strategies
Achieving equity in monitoring, questioning and feedback
Showing high expectations for every student and motivating all students to succeed
Striving to meet the individual academic, emotional and social needs of students
Developing consistency in enthusiasm, fairness and humorous disposition
Being a role model who shows empathy, warmth, and respect to each student

From this kind of developmental orientation, inspiring mentoring programs assess it performance.

Thus, by basing much of its evaluation on the quantitative and qualitative perceptions of the beginning teacher and

providing a needs-based developmental environment where there is positive, non-threatening interaction, a mentoring program has a good chance of penetrating the isolation so destructive in beginning a career in American education.

Final Thoughts

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Teacher mentoring programs now enjoy a history of more than 30 years, spanning from desperate Australian attempts in the 1960s to provide support to new teachers assigned to remote locations to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (1997) proposal to revise teacher licensing altogether, including the creation of an "Initial Educator" license that requires participation in a mentoring program. This history provides some stabilizing precedents, to be sure, and eases the press to justify the allocation of limited staff development resources to mentoring programs.

At the same time, this history introduces the threats of complacency and dangerous assumptions. For example, Veenman's (1984) often cited meta-analysis of the perceived problems of beginning teacher was recently included in mentor training materials prepared by the Louisiana Department of Education (1998-99) as a way to help mentors anticipate the needs of beginning teachers. However, suspecting that Veenman's findings may be dated for today's beginning teachers, I have conducted a study of beginning teachers (Ganser, 1999). In the case of Wisconsin beginning teachers with up to two years of teaching experience, there is almost no correlation between Veenman's rank ordering of perceived problems of beginning teachers and that of Wisconsin teachers; in the case of Baltimore (Maryland) County Public School teachers with four to five years of experience, the correlation is slightly negative. This suggests that Veenman's findings may be far less relevant for mentor trainers than was the case 15 years ago.

More importantly, research on learning to teach, beginning teachers, and teacher induction during the past generation has resulted in significant shifts in our understanding of these critical topics. For example, the structural functionalism view

of teacher induction that suggests that new teachers are "formed" by their work, represented in the pioneer work of Waller (1932) and reoccurring in more recent studies (e.g., Blase, 1985; Hoy, 1969), has been steadily offset by a symbolic interaction view of the occupational socialization of teachers (e.g., Lacey, 1987). Symbolic interactionism suggests that new teachers can be change agents in schools and not just powerless newcomers who are forced to become "company people" in order to survive. Likewise, the increasingly sophisticated research on schools as learning communities (Jenlink, Kinnucan-Welsch, & Odell, 1996; Little & McLaughlin, 1993) reveals that previous views of mentoring may have failed to take into account schools as organizations, thereby presenting an overly simplistic view of mentoring and mentoring programs.

Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon's (1998) recent review of research on learning to teach is particularly relevant to this discussion. They suggest that research on learning to teach can be categorized in the positivist tradition, the progressive tradition, or the social critique tradition. Reasonably, the goals, implementation, and evaluation of mentoring programs necessarily ought to reflect the underlying beliefs about how teachers learn to teach. If learning to teach is solely a matter of applying research-based principles (positivist tradition), then mentoring may be viewed as unrelated to efforts to induct new comers into a particular school organization or community. In this context, mentoring is simply a matter of bringing new teachers "up to speed" more quickly than would be the case if they were left to fend on their own. On the other hand, from the social critique perspective, mentoring efforts must be site specific and acknowledge the possibility that new teachers will be destabilizing to the existing school organization.

The implications are profound. If school districts demand that new teachers "fit in," then mentoring efforts will continue to reflect Waller's (1932) findings. If, alternatively, school districts deliver on their claim that new teachers are hired to

be change agents rather than replacements for the "old timers," then mentoring efforts become an "anti-establishment" initiative that, ironically, must be supported by a new kind of "establishment" that fosters rather stifles change and innovation. The large numbers of new teachers entering the profession over the next decade and the increasing prominence of mentoring programs present an exciting opportunity for mentoring and mentoring program to take advantage of their history and to influence the professional trajectory of new teachers more significantly than ever before.

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